Completing Online Forms

For Beginners

In this guide you will learn about:

- The basics to completing most online forms.
- Completing more complex forms over several pages
- Using forms for everyday activities online

More and more of the things we do every day are now online, and doing things like applying for benefits or paying bills online can help you to save both time and money – this means filling in forms online is now more important than ever before.

That might seem scary at first, but once you get the hang of this easy digital skill you'll wonder what you were worried about.

Before you start

Some online forms are timed, and if left inactive for a period of time they will expire and you may have to start again.

It is therefore beneficial to gather the information you are likely to need beforehand, so you don't have to leave the form part way through while you look for documents or your National Insurance number for example.

Fairly often your email address is required so the organisation can verify who you are, or send you confirmation or progress updates of your application. Make sure you are aware of your email address, and that you know your password to log in and check your emails.

If you don't feel comfortable typing then you could ask someone for assistance for quickness and accuracy. Only ask someone you trust as they may be entering personal or sensitive information, and become aware of your details or any usernames and passwords.

Ensure the form is a secure webpage before entering your details. Look out for the webpage address beginning HTTPS, rather than just HTTP. The 'S' stands for 'Secure'. Also look out for the closed padlock symbol, often towards the right hand side of the address bar.

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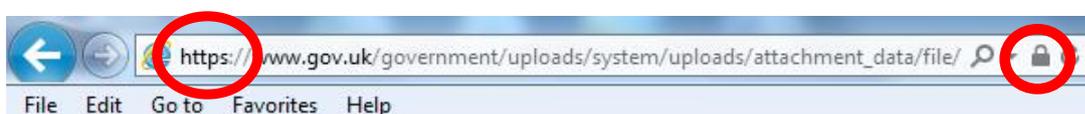
Completing the form

The majority of forms look quite similar, so once you've completed one or two, you will become more confident entering information and navigating your way through any future online forms.

Some forms need to be completed in one go, whereas others (usually lengthier forms) can be saved part way through and completed at a later date. The instructions should tell you of this before you begin.

An asterisk (*) symbol indicates that particular question MUST be completed. The form will not allow you to proceed or submit it until that question is answered.

A typical online form is shown below.

About you

* indicates required information

Title	❓ *	[drop-down ▾]
Last name or family name	*	[ ]
First name	*	[ ]
Middle name(s)		[ ]
Have you ever been known by any other last name or family name?	❓ *	⚪ Yes ⚪ No
Date of birth *eg dd mm yyyy*	*	[ ][ ] [ ][ ] [ ][ ][ ][ ]

Click on drop-down arrows to select an answer from the list.

Use your keyboard to type information into standard boxes.

Click in a circle to select the appropriate answer.

Sometimes you may be prompted to enter dates in certain formats, E.g. DD MM YYYY.

For people who don't like to keep using the mouse or laptop touchpad to navigate through forms, keyboard keys can be used instead:

- To move to the next field, menu item or button: use the **Tab** key.
- To move to the previous field, menu item or button: use **Shift+Tab**.
- To click a button, or select a checkbox: use the **Enter** key.
- To select a radio button: use the **Arrow** keys.

Navigating between pages

Longer forms may be displayed over more than one page. To ensure you don't lose any information you've entered or accidently close a form completely, use the 'Next' or 'Previous' buttons on the form, rather than your browsers 'Back' and 'Forward' buttons.
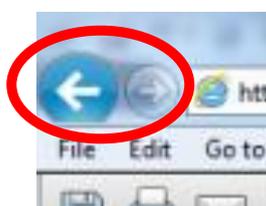
CAPTCHA boxes

To verify that an individual is completing the online form rather than a piece of software programmed to complete multiple forms fraudulently, you sometimes have to 'type what you see'.

This is usually one or two words or several letters/numbers very close together, which you need to type into the box below. If you can't distinguish the letters you can try another, or click to hear the word read out aloud (through your speakers or headphones).

An example is shown below:

You can have a go at completing a CAPTCHA box on the following webpage:
http://silvertraining.co.uk/help/ucp-form-captcha/

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Submitting forms

Once you have reached the end of the form, it is a good idea to check all the information you have entered is complete and accurate to the best of your knowledge. Once you have done this and are happy to send it off to the organisation, click 'Submit'.

The example shown below also includes a tick-box, which has to be ticked to confirm you have read and agreed with their statements.

Declaration

In submitting this form you are declaring that;
- the information given is correct to the best of your knowledge and belief
- failure to supply or give false information is an offence for which a penalty may be imposed
- you understand that you need to inform the Council Tax Section as soon as there is a change to the information

I have read and agree to comply with the above statements *

Data Protection Act

We will collect and store personal information about you when you complete this form. Your information will only be used for the purposes indicated and we will hold it securely. It will not be used for other purposes without your permission and will not be kept longer than necessary.

Previous | Submit | Cancel

Reference numbers

After submitting an online form, you are often given a reference number. It is best to keep hold of this in case you need to chase up progress at a later date. Either make a note of it, print it out or send it as an email to yourself (if it is an option).

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